

VZCZCXRO7696
PP RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHNEH
DE RUEHC #9500 2952324
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 222304Z OCT 09
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 6155
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 4117
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY 6730
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 5555
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 7346
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 7392
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 8922
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0024
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 6834
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 2743
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 8316
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 6729
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0976
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 9829
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD PRIORITY 0129
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3438
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 2869
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 8328
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 9796

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 109500

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KAWC](#) [PHUM](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: REPORT TO CONGRESS ON RECENT CONFLICT
HANDED TO SRI LANKAN AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 109032

Classified By: SCA A/S Robert O. Blake, Jr., reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Blake and Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Investigations Rapp met with Sri Lankan Ambassador Jaliya Wickramasuriya and DCM Tissa Wijeratne October 21 at the State Department to provide them a copy of the Department of State "Report to Congress on Incidents during the Recent Conflict in Sri Lanka." The report was posted on the Department (S/WCI) website on October 22.

¶2. (C) Rapp first asserted Sri Lanka's right to self defense against a terrorist group. He also stated at the outset that both sides to the conflict are required to respect international humanitarian law. He went on to outline the report, noting that it included reports of the use of human shields and child soldiers by the LTTE, and reports of unlawful attacks on civilians and civilian objects such as hospitals. Rapp next identified specific limitations, such as lack of access to the conflict zone and the inability to corroborate many incidents, which explained why the State Department was not in a position to draw factual or legal conclusions. Rather, the report should be seen as a compilation of credible incidents worthy of investigation by the GSL. He expressed great respect for and confidence in Sri Lanka's legal institutions and traditions. He said the United States is not calling for international investigations, but is looking to the GSL to identify and implement a credible accountability process. Blake emphasized the importance of the Sri Lankan government engaging Tamil leaders in Sri Lanka on what they would consider to be a credible accountability mechanism.

¶3. (C) Wickramasuriya had no immediate reaction to the report itself, but said the GSL believed that economic development and resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) would foster reconciliation. As the oldest democracy in Asia, he said Sri Lanka has its own investigatory processes, including administrative sanction against police and soldiers who commit abuses, such as occurred in the

1980s. He said the Army was much more disciplined this time and showed restraint in this final offensive against the LTTE, losing a lot of soldiers as a result.

14. (C) Blake noted recent information the USG had received that the GSL was about to embark on an ambitious returns process over the next few weeks. Wickramasuriya said there would be 50,000 releases by the end of the month. The government had agreed to allow IDPs who cannot return to their villages -- due to mines or lack of infrastructure -- to join friends, in addition to joining family members (which had not led to many releases). Some of these releases would be to Colombo. He said 50,000 per month would be the target, emphasizing that with the ten new excavators the GSL has acquired, demining is moving very quickly -- he witnessed it himself during his recent visit -- and the GSL expects to have the majority of inhabited areas demined within six months. Resettlements would begin within two months to newly demined areas. Wickramasuriya also said that all IDPs now have ID cards, and all have been registered, though a separate screening process continues for "strong LTTE cadres." Blake and Rapp emphasized the importance of the GSL communicating the positive steps it is taking. (COMMENT: We will need to verify these measures and monitor these releases closely to ensure they are genuine. END COMMENT.)
CLINTON